

The Open Library of Humanities – Paula Clemente Vega, OLH Marketing Officer

The Open Library of Humanities (OLH) is a charitable organisation dedicated to publishing open access scholarship with no author-facing article processing charges (APCs). The OLH publishing platform supports academic journals from across the humanities disciplines, as well as hosting its own multidisciplinary journal. Launched by Martin Eve and Caroline Edwards in 2015, the OLH has received two substantial grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to date, and has built a sustainable business model with its partner libraries. The platform publishes 27 journals in various disciplines and languages from classics, modern languages and cultures, philosophy, theology and history, to political theory, sociology, anthropology, film and new media studies, and digital humanities. We are part of a growing global community of not-for profit publishers that explore different business models and innovative approaches to open publishing that adapt to the needs, in this case, of humanities scholars, so poorly funded by comparison to other scientific disciplines.

The OLH has been internationally recognised as an important development in open access for the humanities and for its innovative business model. The current level of Article Processing Charges makes gold OA publishing unaffordable for the majority of unfunded humanities scholars. The OLH aims instead to implement a collaborative, or collective, funding model for gold open access in the humanities without APCs. The model proposed by the OLH is one where publication costs do not fall on the institution or researchers but, are instead financed collaboratively through an international library consortium, where each member pays an annual fee according to the country and size of the institution. Reducing and distributing the costs of publication across its members, with an economy of scale that improves as more institutions join. Our idea is that research organisations and libraries make a relatively small contribution that covers the costs of running a publication platform on which peer-reviewed scholarly journals can then be published as open access. The international consortium of libraries is comprised by nearly 300 institutions that collectively fund the platform including Harvard, Cambridge, Yale, Princeton, and many others. What we propose is a scholar-led and consortial business model that can be adapted to other ventures/contexts and that allows researches and universities alike to take back control of their own publications and research dissemination.

Scholar-led initiatives such as the OLH have proven for years now that there are alternatives to the standard APC model (pay-to-publish) and that it is possible to sustain them in the long-term. Our mission is to support and extend open access to scholarship in the humanities – for free, for everyone, for ever.